

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Brandon Rashad Golden, #310102,)	C/A No.: 1:17-405-HMH-SVH
)	
Petitioner,)	
)	
vs.)	
)	REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
State of South Carolina and County of)	
York,)	
)	
Respondents.)	
)	

Brandon Rashad Golden (“Petitioner”), proceeding pro se, filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. Pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Local Civ. Rule 73.02(B)(2)(c) (D.S.C.), the undersigned is authorized to review such petitions and submit findings and recommendations to the district judge. For the reasons that follow, the undersigned recommends that the district judge dismiss the petition in this case without requiring respondents to file an answer.

I. Factual and Procedural Background

Petitioner alleges that on February 26, 2014, he pled guilty “to manufacture/possession of other substances in Schedules I to III or flunitrazepam, 3rd or subsequent offense and possession of other controlled substance in schedules in I to V, first offense” in York County, South Carolina. [ECF No. 1 at 1]. Petitioner claims the state court judge sentenced him to six years. *Id.* Petitioner states he did not file a direct appeal. *Id.* at 2. Petitioner alleges he filed an application for post-conviction relief (“PCR”) that was denied on August 23, 2016. *Id.* at 3. Petitioner claims he appealed the denial of his PCR application and states his appeal is still pending. *Id.* at 6.

II. Discussion

A. Standard of Review

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of this petition pursuant to the Rules Governing Section 2254 Proceedings for the United States District Court, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA), Pub. L. No. 104-132, 110 Stat. 1214, and other habeas corpus statutes. Pro se complaints are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys. *Gordon v. Leeke*, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978). A federal court is charged with liberally construing a complaint filed by a pro se litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007). When a federal court is evaluating a pro se complaint, the plaintiff's allegations are assumed to be true. *Fine v. City of N.Y.*, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2d Cir. 1975). The mandated liberal construction afforded to pro se pleadings means that if the court can reasonably read the pleadings to state a valid claim on which the plaintiff could prevail, it should do so. Nevertheless, the requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts that set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 901 F.2d 387, 390–91 (4th Cir. 1990).

B. Analysis

The requirement that state remedies must be exhausted before filing a federal habeas corpus action is found in 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b)(1), which provides that “[a]n application for a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of a person in custody pursuant to the

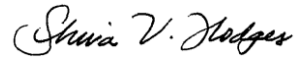
judgment of a State court shall not be granted unless it appears that (A) the applicant has exhausted the remedies available in the courts of the State.” The exhaustion requirement is “grounded in principles of comity; in a federal system, the States should have the first opportunity to address and correct alleged violations of state prisoner’s federal rights.” *Coleman v. Thompson*, 501 U.S. 722, 731 (1991); *Lawson v. Dixon*, 3 F.3d 743, 749–50 n.4 (4th Cir. 1993). In *Matthews v. Evatt*, 105 F.3d 907 (4th Cir. 1997), the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held that “a federal habeas court may consider only those issues which have been ‘fairly presented’ to the state courts To satisfy the exhaustion requirement, a habeas petitioner must fairly present his claim to the state’s highest court. The burden of proving that a claim has been exhausted lies with the petitioner.” *Id.* at 911 (citations omitted), *abrogated on other grounds by United States v. Barnette*, 644 F.3d 192 (4th Cir. 2011).

Petitioner indicates his appeal of the denial of his PCR application is currently pending. [ECF No. 1 at 6]. Because it is clear from the face of the petition that Petitioner has potentially viable state court remedies, this habeas action is subject to summary dismissal for lack of exhaustion. *See Galloway v. Stephenson*, 510 F. Supp. 840, 846 (M.D.N.C. 1981) (“When state court remedies have not been exhausted, absent special circumstances, a federal habeas court may not retain the case on its docket, pending exhaustion, but should dismiss the petition.”); *see also Pitchess v. Davis*, 421 U.S. 482, 490 (1975).

III. Conclusion and Recommendation

For the foregoing reasons, the undersigned recommends that the court dismiss this petition without prejudice and without requiring respondents to file a return.

IT IS SO RECOMMENDED.



February 17, 2017
Columbia, South Carolina

Shiva V. Hodges
United States Magistrate Judge

**The parties are directed to note the important information in the attached
“Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation.”**

Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. “[I]n the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must ‘only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.’” *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005) (quoting Fed. R. Civ. P. 72 advisory committee’s note).

Specific written objections must be filed within fourteen (14) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a), (d). Filing by mail pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Robin L. Blume, Clerk
United States District Court
901 Richland Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984).